Castlemaine Naturalist

July 2010

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Monthly newsletter of the Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc.

Fungi at Welsh Village – *Mycena* sp.
- Photo by Noel Young

Welsh Village Field Trip

On a cool, overcast winter afternoon, nine members of the Club set out to explore the surrounds of the Welsh Village, located on a section of the Great Dividing Trail south-west of Expedition Pass Reservoir.

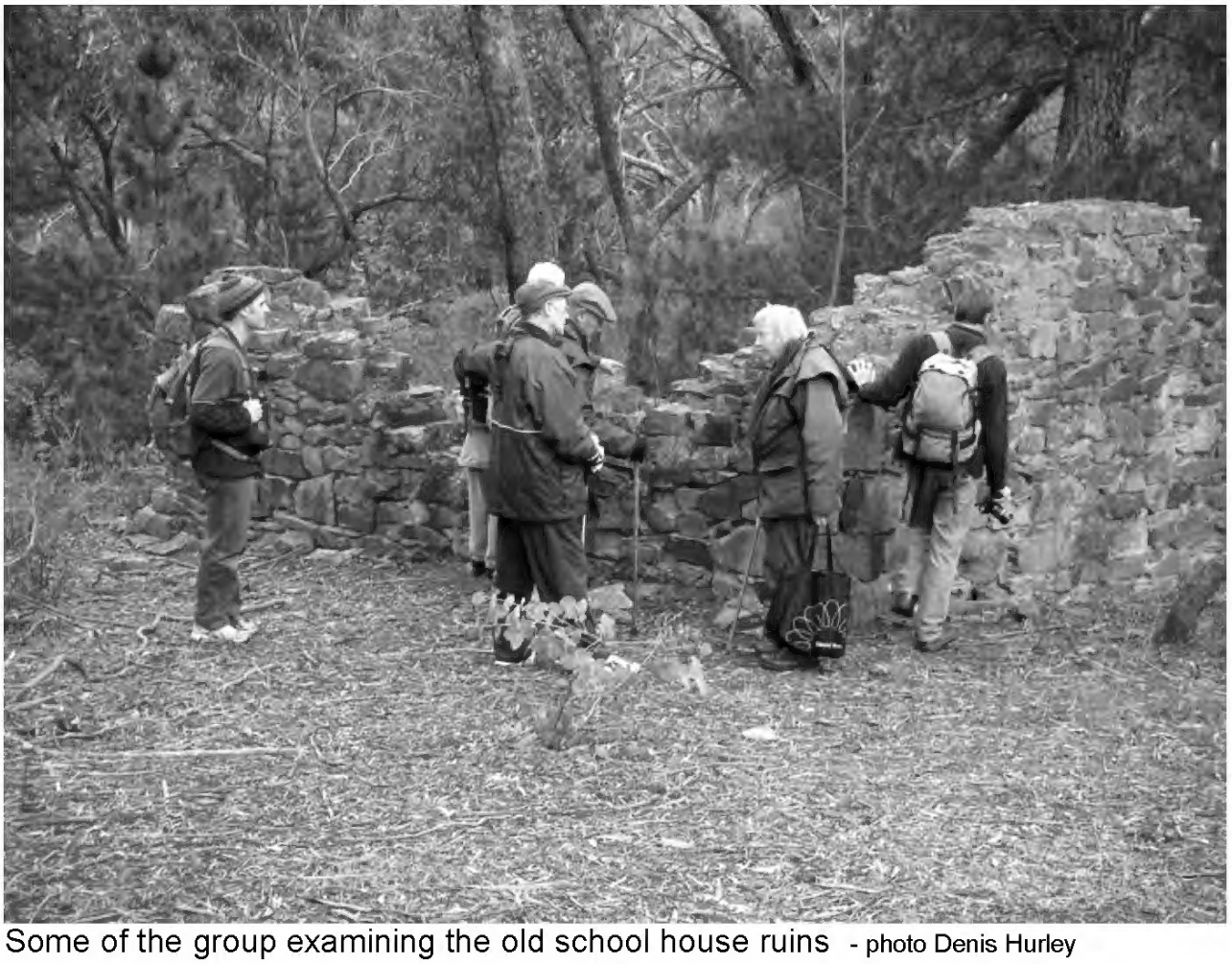
A fairly steep, rough track led us to our first point of interest, a large slate quarry, disused since the 1980s. Purple coral-pea clumps (Hardenbergia violacea) were abundant in this area, their branches scrambling over low, stunted bushes. Budding flower heads indicated a lovely show in a few weeks' time.

From the open cut, tracks rambled through and around mullock heaps and shallow shafts (although some are not so shallow and are fenced off to protect unwary walkers). Necklace ferns (Asplenium flabellifolium) clung to some of the mineshaft walls. These trails leading to and away from the village itself can be fairly hazardous underfoot, particularly in damp weather. But the wet area made up for the dangers by providing a good display of fungi.

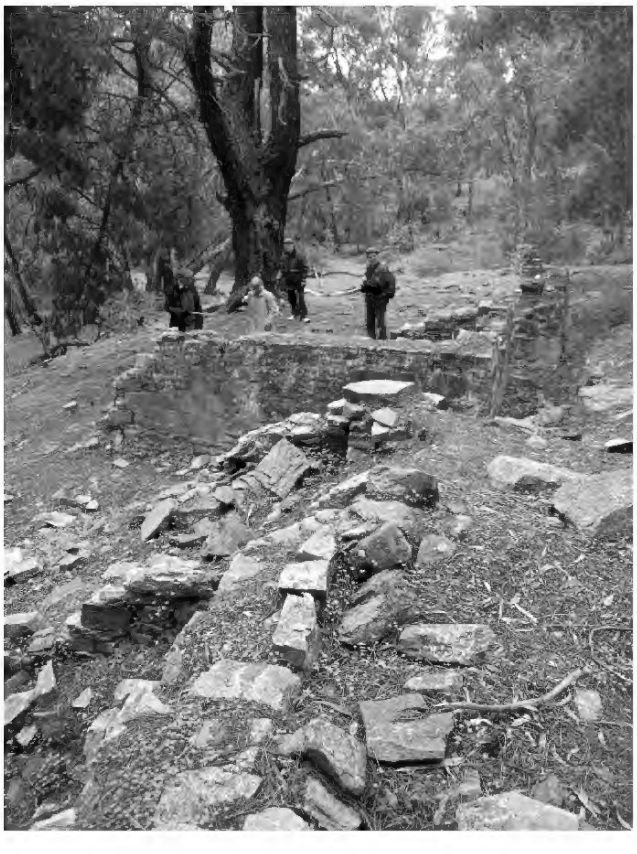
Some of the fungi seen were Fly Agaric (Amanita muscaria), Australian Honey Fungus (Armillaria luteobubalina) and Slippery Jack (Suillus luteus).

Afternoon tea was taken on a terraced slope overlooking the ruins of miners' cottages and the old school stone walls. The corners and straightness of the walls after 150 years or so of disuse are a tribute to the skills of the early stonemasons. In a quiet moment, I wondered if some of these pioneers had sat like I did and pondered the old country in this harsh new land, perhaps hoping to return to loved ones some day.

It was impossible not to sit on Twining Fringe Lillies (Thysanotus patersonii), whose fragile stems wove around any object remaining inanimate for more than a short time.



Some of the group examining the old school house ruins - photo Denis Hurley



Plants in flower were grey box (E. microcarpa), yellow gum (E. leucoxylon) and a golden wattle (A. pycnantha). The basal leaves of many orchids suggested that this site is well worth a return visit in spring.

The day was made all the more interesting by the wealth of knowledge in the group, in particular that of Richard Piesse and Penny Garnett.

Many thanks for a pleasant afternoon. I have resided in Castlemaine for 40 years and this was my first visit to the Welsh Village.

- – Denis Hurley

Welsh Village – above: house ruins, left: Slippery Jacks, right: open reef workings
photos by Noel Young

Bird and Bat Banding scheme

Geraldine Harris

On the first of November 2009 Jarrod, our son, found a dead bird washed up on the beach at Hutt Gully between Anglesea and Airey's Inlet. He removed the aluminium band on its leg which read -

WRITE – WILDLIFE CSIRO
CANBERRA AUSTRALIA
280- U6862

Stuart Dashper at Birds Australia helped put us in touch with the Bird and Bat Banding Scheme in Canberra. He explained that it was an important find because Albatross are very long-lived birds that travel widely through the southern oceans and are currently declining in number. Any information that can be obtained about their movements is important to aid in their conservation.

After reporting the find we learned that the band had been placed on a Shy Albatross *Thalassarche cauta* on the 27/03/1985 at Albatross Island, Tasmania.

Age Code: nestling, Sex Code: unknown.
It was banded by: Mr N P Brothers C/- Dr Rosemary Gales.
The time between banding and recovery is 24 years 7 months 5 days.
The bird had moved a distance of 222 km with a bearing of 349 degrees.

We also received an very interesting information sheet about the Bird and Bat Banding Scheme which covered training of banders, band design, other marking techniques and some information learned from banding studies (copies available from Geraldine, Ph54742244).

PS: When our Angair Newsletter arrived this month we noted that another Shy Albatross had been reported on 11/3/2010. This time the bird had been banded on 12/3/1984 at Pedra Banca, Tasmania.

Age Code: nestling, Sex Code: unknown.
It was banded by Mr N P Brothers C/- Dr Rosemary Gales.
The time between banding and recovery is 25 years 11 months 27 days.
This bird had moved a distance of 647 km with a bearing of 337 degrees.

Bird List for Botanical Gardens

A group from the **Bendigo Field Naturalists** visited the Castlemaine Botanical Gardens on May 18th The following bird list for the visit was passed on by Anne Bridley

Red rumped Parrot
Black Ducks
Wood Duck
Plover
White plumed H'eater
Purple crowned Lorikeet
Striated Thornbill
Long-billed Corella
Scrub Wren
Bronzewing Pigeon
Red browed Finch
Blackbird
White faced Heron
Moorhens
Blue Wrens
Grey Fantail
Yellow faced H'eater
Golden Whistler
Silvereye
Yellow Thornbill
Cockatoo
Spotted Pardalote
Pied Currawong
Grey Currawong
Powerful Owl
Straw necked Ibis
Crimson Rosella
Eastern Rosella
Mudlark
White naped H'eater
Shrike Thrush
Brown Thornbill
Galah
Red Wattle-bird
Mistletoe Bird
Australian Raven
Eastern Spine-bill
Boobook Owl

Please check if you are financial We still have some outstanding

Subscriptions Overdue

If your Newsletter envelope has a red mark or other notification, your subscription is recorded as overdue.

It is important to support your club, as we have to pay significant amounts for insurance and other costs

Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater Survey Weekend 15 and 16 May 2010

Chris Timewell

On Saturday morning, three intrepid CFNC birdwatchers went searching around the woodlands along Mia Mia Rd and Mia Mia Track, near Newstead. At the four locations checked, the Grey Box and Yellow Gum were flowering well and aggressive Red Wattlebirds were abundant throughout. Despite the good numbers of Swift Parrots recorded from this area in the preceding weeks, there were no confirmed records on this day (neither from us, nor from another two groups looking in this same area on this same day). Bird calls that could have been Swifties were heard briefly from two of the locations, but the calls were coming from within adjacent private land and therefore couldn't be chased down. Other highlights included a pair of Hooded Robins, and another couple of birds were flushed up that were likely to be Spotted Quail-thrush.

Around midday, I checked out a row of profusely flowering Ironbarks along Duke St, just to the east of the Wesley Hill Market. They were being used by a surprisingly low number of birds, and very few honeyeaters of any type were recorded.

On the afternoon of the 15th was the CFNC excursion to Sailors Falls, south of Daylesford. Although not known as Swift Parrot area, I kept my ears and eyes open nonetheless. Unsurprisingly unsuccessful.

On the morning of the 16th May, Lisa and I went searching along Golden Point Rd. Large planted flowering Blue Gums opposite the dog kennels didn't contain any Swifties, but we did manage to tick our first Noisy Friarbird for the local area. The woodlands around and below the Expedition Pass Reservoir were a hive of bird activity, but there was little flowering and few honeyeaters. Another patch of woodland not far from the reservoir (on the opposite side of the road) supported large numbers of Fuscous Honeyeaters, White-naped Honeyeaters and Striated Pardalotes, which were foraging on lerps.

Birds seen during Swift Parrot surveys (not including Sailors Falls) were as follows:

Bird Name	Mia Mia Track (4 sites)	Duke St Ironbarks (1 site)	Golden Point Rd (3 sites)
Little Pied Cormorant	-	-	1
Purple Swamphen	-	-	1
Dusky Moorhen	-	-	1
Crested Pigeon	-	-	Heard
Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo	-	-	3
Galah	20+	-	2
Long-billed Corella	Heard	Heard	Heard
Sulfur-crested Cockatoo	-	-	2
Crimson Rosella	-	-	7
Eastern Rosella	8	-	-
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	-	-	1
Laughing Kookaburra	-	1	-
Spotted Quail-thrush	2 possible	-	-
White-throated Treecreeper	-	-	Heard
Brown Treecreeper	2	-	-
Superb Fairy-wren	Heard	-	2
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	2	2	-
Striated Thornbill	-	-	4
Spotted Pardalote	Heard	Heard	Heard
Striated Pardalote	-	-	10
Red Wattlebird	60+	6	6
Noisy Friarbird	-	-	1
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	1	-	6
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	4	-	1
Fuscous Honeyeater	6+	-	40
White-naped Honeyeater	-	-	20
Brown-headed Honeyeater	-	-	1
New Holland Honeyeater	-	2	Heard
Eastern Spinebill	-	-	1
Hooded Robin	2	-	-
Grey Shrike Thrush	-	-	4
Grey Fantail	-	-	2
Willie Wagtail	2	-	-
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	1	-	-
Olive-backed Oriole	-	-	2
Dusky Woodswallow	-	-	1
Australian Magpie	Heard	-	4
Grey Currawong	-	-	2
Australian Raven	-	-	heard
Little Raven	1	heard	-
White-winged Chough	-	-	6
Silvereye	-	1	-

You are invited to attend the

LAUNCH

of the

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc

Indigenous Plants of Castlemaine and Surrounds Guide

This information guide was produced as a resource for small block holders, farmers, town residents, schools, tourists, bushwalkers, and anyone who loves the land. The guide will help people identify indigenous plants found in the Box and Ironbark forests and woodlands of this region.

It will be launched by our honoured guest **John Landy, AC, CVE, MBE** on

Thursday 22nd July, 5pm
Ray Bradfield Room
Castlemaine

There will be food and drink, and of course, you can pick up a free copy of your guide. Please RSVP to Denis Hurley 54722753 by 19th July

Observations

- Jan Hall passed around a Sugar Glider specimen at the June meeting
- Geoff Harris reported Welcome Swallows nesting
- Rita found luminous fungi recently
- Neville Cooper saw Button Quails on the Mia Mia track while on the Swift Parrot Survey
- On 27th May; Fryers ridge – Rough Wattle *Acacia aspera* and Common Heath *Epacris impressa* in flower, and along Irishtown track, Red tipped Greenhood and Scented Sundew – Richard Piesse
- 9th to 11th June – Four Speckled Warblers back after not being seen for several weeks – accompanied by 15+ Buff rumped Thornbills, Pardalotes, and Silvereyes. Brown headed Honeyeaters feeding on Correas in Merrifield St.

  Tall Greenhoods on Youngmans Track appear to be 6 to 8 weeks earlier than last year - Denis Hurley

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the club

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Programme
July 2010

Fri July 9 meeting: NICK LAYNE The Loddon River
Sat July 10 field trip: Hamiltons Crossing on the Loddon
Thurs July 22 - Plant Guide Launch, 5pm [see notice p 7]

Fri August 13 meeting: EILEEN MCDONALD Bees
Sat August 14 field trip: The Whipstick Forest

Fri Sept 10 meeting: MALCOM CALDER
Sat Sept 11 field trip: Sales Track

VISITORS ARE WELCOME AT CLUB ACTIVITIES

General meetings - (second Friday of each month, except January) are held in the Uniting Church (UCA) Hall (enter from Lyttleton St.) at 8.00 pm.
Field Trips - (Saturday following the general meeting) leave from the car park opposite Castle Motel, Duke Street at 1.30pm sharp unless stated otherwise. BYO morning and/or afternoon tea. Outdoor excursions are likely to be cancelled in extreme weather conditions. There are NO excursions on total fire ban days.
Business meetings - fourth Thursday of each month, except December, at Denis Hurley's; 20 Merrifield St., at 7.30 pm. All members are invited to attend.

Subscriptions for 2010
Ordinary membership: Single $27, Family $35
Pensioner or student: Single $24, Family $29
Subscription includes postage of the monthly newsletter, Castlemaine Naturalist

2010 Committee

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